

769th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy)



December 6, 2002 — Issue 9

Soldiers of the 769th Engineer Battalion:

To the men and women of the 769th Engineer Battalion, I want to welcome each of you into December, the last month of the year.

What is so significant about December? Well, first of all, it is probably the most celebrated of all months due to Christmas and New Year's Eve. It is a time for families to get together and exchange gifts of love and laughter. Even though we may not be physically with our loved ones, we will think of each other and keep them in dreams and prayers.

But more importantly for the 769th, it signals that the end of our deployment will soon be upon us. There will be lots of activity around the post and especially this base camp. You will see the beginning of redeployment packing. I and CSM Serio will be hosting a series of town hall meetings to give each of you the opportunity to ask questions and

voice concerns.

The first week of December brought us a very important visitor. The Undersecretary of the Army Mr. Les Brownlee toured the Airfield and Camp Cajun. He had the privilege of visiting with some of our troops and a few of them received coins. Undersecretary Brownlee will soon return to the Pentagon and report on our activities as well as the progress we made at Bagram and Khandahar Airfields.

Our Thanksgiving festivities went very well with an excellent turnout from our friends from EOD, 678th and 249th engineers. Everyone seemed to be in good spirits and all had a great time. I am proud of the participation and efforts put in to preparing for the gathering. Sorry that we didn't get the fried turkeys like we had expected.



LTC Boutte'

I urge everyone to keep in touch with their families this month. Call home and wish them well. Don't forget to send any presents as soon as you can. The cutoff is December 6th for priority mail to reach the states on time. Don't wait until then.

We will have a party for Christmas so start planning now. I need everyone's help so if there are volunteers, please see 1LT Townley. Until next time, drive on.

Gospel Choir Sings to Fellow Believers

The Gospel Choir pulls off another successful performance. The group performed for about one hundred fellow believers at the Air Force pavilion located in the Air Force Village this past Wednesday. A BBQ was held prior to the performance for those present to enjoy. Soldiers from the 769th make up a majority of the choir. The best word to describe the performance is breathless. It sincerely touched all those that were present. Congratulations goes out to the members of the choir.



SOLDIER PROFILE

Each week, this newsletter would like to recognize an exceptional soldier or group of soldiers for his or her commitment and positive work ethic. Please send recommendations to 1LT Townley and the reasons why you think a particular soldier(s) should be recognized.



Dump Truck Section

This week the newsletter crew would like to recognize the dump truck section of equipment platoon. This group, headed by SSG Venable, transport a large portion of material to various horizontal projects around Bagram Air Field. They support the line companies with 20 ton dump trucks.

Good job to all those who participate in these operations.

A few words from CSM Serio...

Like LTC Boutte, I too want to wish everyone a happy holiday season. We still have a couple of months to go before we begin redeploying stateside, so keep up the good work on our engineer missions.

A reminder about soldier responsibilities. We still need everyone to look and act like professional soldiers. Proper and complete uniforms are required even after duty hours. Polypro tops and bottoms are not to be worn as outerwear. I have witnessed several soldiers walking around in just their polypros going to the shower or latrines, and even in the TOCs to use the phone.

When away from your immediate

duty area, put on your DCU jackets and headgear. The black fleece is only authorized to be worn with the gortex jacket. No gortex jacket, no black fleece. It's a soldier's duty to be in the proper uniform at all times.

Cold weather awareness should be on everyone's mind now that the temperatures are dipping well below freezing. Bundle up to stay warm. Although everyone should have received flu shots, it won't keep you from catching the common cold. Take care of yourselves and remember to continue drinking plenty of fluids.

We are still experiencing a water shortage and have been forced



CSM James Serio

to institute shower times and must enforce water conservation. The laundry facility will only be open a short time each week. I urge you to use the contracted laundry service since it will be difficult to accommodate everyone trying to wash clothes.

Congratulations to the soldiers who participated in the Bagram Marathon. Continue to excel like the professionals I know you are.

Chaplain's Corner

Blue, Blue Christmas—It's Not Just Elvis' Problem!"

For the next three weeks, we will be experiencing the shortest days and longest nights of the year.

The earliest Christians adopted the Roman holiday to the Sun god as a time to remember the birth of God's son, Jesus. The ancient astronomers had the date off just a bit, and miscalculated 25 December as the longest night of the year. In actuality we don't know when Jesus was born, but ordinarily shepherds don't "abide in the field" during the winter.

Psychiatrists tell us that the lack of sunlight can lead to a type of depression called S.A.D., or seasonal affective disorder. When the nights are long and the darkness unremitting, some people develop what we sometimes call the winter blahs.

This is a good time of the year to spread a little light sunshine! Watch for someone who's struggling a bit, and give him or her words of encouragement. Remember that Jesus was born in a manger to poor parents, so give a gift to someone who has no means of paying you back. Give a compliment, or just listen to someone who misses home.

Will you be a Christmas "light" this month?

God bless you, and have a good day!

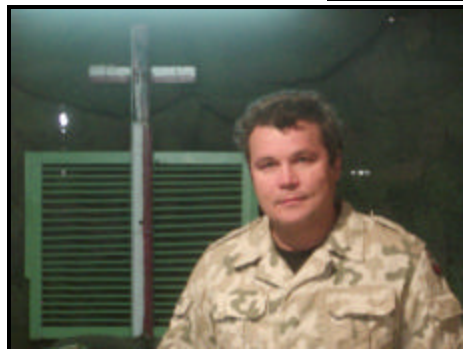
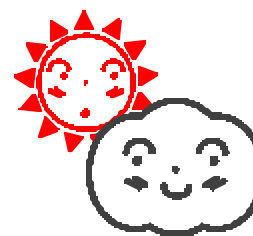
Chaplain Sanders

Special Note: Let's always remember to be polite guests in this country, especially with regard to the local population and their centers of worship. In particular, please be sure to treat the mosque on our grounds with respect and dignity. Thanks!



Camp Cajun Weather Forecast

Friday: 15/ 50 Sunny
Saturday: 15/ 50 Sunny
Sunday: 15/ 50 Sunny
Monday: 15/ 50 Sunny



Major Roslay Augustyn

Father Augustyn has been stationed in Bagram, Afghanistan since March, and plans on being deployed for 12 months. He is one of two Catholic Priests stationed here serving as the Polish chaplain, as well as performing services around post and visiting troops stationed in theater. His original tour was to last four months but has extended in order to continue to serve the troops.

Since his tour began he has baptized two American soldiers and converted one. If you would like to attend his services they are held in the Polish compound.

Only the Strong Survive

The first Annual Mine Field Marathon was held November 29. Instead of a starter pistol, the event was started by an explosion to represent a mine. The 26.2 mile course consisted of looping the Air Field 4 times. It began at check point ten and ended at the American Hospital. There were about 150 participants. Congratulations to 1LT Nicole Townley and SGT Jake Witte (shown right) of HSC for completing the marathon.



How much money do you think you've spent at the PX since you've been here ?

"Not much, probably a grand total of \$150.00" SPC Fuller

"Probably about \$600 on food and expendable items." SPC Hains

"I don't know exactly how much money I've spent, I've bought a lot of coins and t-shirts." SSG Thompson

"About \$8." 2LT Bendich (big spender)



Question of the Week

What are some of the activities you would like to see for Christmas?

Submit answers to 1LT Townley

Thanksgiving Celebration

Thanksgiving Day symbolizes something different to everyone. To many of us it means spending time with family, watching football, eating way too much food, and then taking well deserved naps. This year is somewhat different. We soldiers can stop and think of many reasons to be thankful.



We enjoy freedom that we are now defending for our families at home. We are joyous and righteous when thinking of all the pleasures freedom brings. We have all earned the right to choose; a right that people of many nations on earth don't have the opportunity to experience.

769th engineers celebrated Thanksgiving by gathering together to relax and talk to friends in a stress free environment. I hope everyone enjoyed this small celebration. It will certainly be one Thanksgiving that will not be forgotten.

249th Prime Power and 678th Engineer Detachment Hard at Work



These units are working together to improve the water purification system by installing under-ground water lines. Prime Power is providing assistance by ensuring buried power lines are not damaged during the installation.

And yes, somebody has to do it. Soldiers of the 678th are digging the majority of the trenches by hand to guarantee the power grid is not damaged or taken off-line needlessly. This improvement should help ease the water shortage Bagram Airfield has experienced the past few weeks.

As they say, this is an “Army of One” and all units must work together as a team for the common good of all. Thanks for doing such a wonderful job and helping to improve our quality of life.

Media Calls

Media personnel from CNN were present at the 769th compound to allow troops an opportunity to say hello to loved ones at home. The crew was then present on Thanksgiving day at the south dining facility to televise our holiday meal.

Soldiers may not be home for the holidays however, the various news outlets are providing media coverage to reassure family members at home that their loved ones are doing well and have plenty to fill their bellies.



SFC Jimmy Pecoraro

Thanksgiving Pics



SPC Streva, "Chip", SPC Cormier



SSG Mac, CPT Mooney, & Polish Sappers



SGT Garcia, SPC Martin, SFC Hotard



SPC Haney



SGT Prince



1LT Spann



The Girls



The Boys



Muscle Bound

Since our arrival in July, the troops of the 769th has made working out a number one priority. The gym located near 4 corners is occupied predominantly by the members of the 769th EN BN. The gym offers a variety of weight lifting equipment, ping pong tables, and exercise bikes. If you want to come join the rest of the crew, feel free to do so. You'll be welcomed with open arms and any assistance that is necessary.

Commo Honored for Their Hard Work

327th Signal BN presented a plaque to HSC's commo section for their support and assistance during the deployment. The commo section has been assisting the 327th Signal BN in wiring and maintaining voice and data communication lines on Bagram Air Field. Thank you for the hard work and dedication. You make the 769th proud.



Under Secretary of the Army Visits Camp Cajun

Camp Cajun received a visit from the Under Secretary of the Army, Les Brownlee, while touring Bagram Airfield. LTC Boutte' gave him a warm southern welcome and provided information on our missions and project progression during our deployment in Afghanistan..

Baby Dozier

Congratulations on your new addition. SPC Martin Dozier of HSC's Commo Section, and wife April Dozier welcomed the arrival of their daughter Emily Paige Dozier. She was born on November 14 at 3:30 p.m., weighed 9 lbs. 2 ozs. and was 20 1/2 inches in length.



If you have anything you would like published in the newsletter please submit to 1LT Townley.

Written & Published by:
1LT Townley—SSG Thompson
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SPC Haines

A Soldier's Night Before Christmas

'Twas The Night Before Christmas,
He Lived All Alone,
In A One Bedroom House
Made Of Plaster And Stone.

I Had Come Down The Chimney
With Presents To Give,
And To See Just Who
In This Home Did Live.

I Looked All About,
A Strange Sight I Did
See,
No Tinsel, No Presents,
Not Even A Tree.

No Stocking By Mantle,
Just Boots Filled With
Sand,
On The Wall Hung Pic-
tures
Of Far Distant Lands.

With Medals And
Badges,
Awards Of All Kinds,
A Sober Thought
Came Through My
Mind.

For This House Was
Different,
It Was Dark And
Dreary,
I Found The Home Of A
Soldier,
Once I Could See
Clearly.

The Soldier Lay Sleep-
ing,
Silent, Alone,
Curled Up On The Floor
In This One Bedroom Home.

The Face Was So Gentle,
The Room In Such Disorder,
Not How I Pictured
A United States Soldier.

Was This The Hero
Of Whom I'd Just Read?

Curled Up On A Poncho,
The Floor For A Bed?

I Realized The Families
That I Saw This Night,
Owed Their Lives To These Sol-
diers



Who Were Willing To Fight.
Soon Round The World,
The Children Would Play,
And Grownups Would Celebrate
A Bright Christmas Day.

They All Enjoyed Freedom
Each Month Of The Year,
Because Of The Soldiers,

Like The One Lying Here.
I Couldn't Help Wonder
How Many Lay Alone,
On A Cold Christmas Eve
In A Land Far From Home.

The Very Thought
Brought A Tear To My
Eye,
I Dropped To My
Knees
And Started To Cry.

The Soldier Awakened
And I Heard A Rough
Voice,
"Santa Don't Cry,
This Life Is My Choice;

I Fight For Freedom,
I Don't Ask For More,
My Life Is My God,
My Country, My
Corps."

The Soldier Rolled Over
And Drifted To Sleep,
I Couldn't Control It,
I Continued To Weep.

I Kept Watch For Hours,
So Silent And Still
And We Both Shivered
From The Cold Night's
Chill.

I Didn't Want To Leave
On That Cold, Dark,
Night,
This Guardian Of Honor
So Willing To Fight.

Then The Soldier Rolled Over,
With A Voice Soft And Pure,
Whispered, "Carry On Santa,
It's Christmas Day, All Is Secure."

One Look At My Watch,
And I Knew He Was Right.
"Merry Christmas My Friend,
And To All A Good Night."